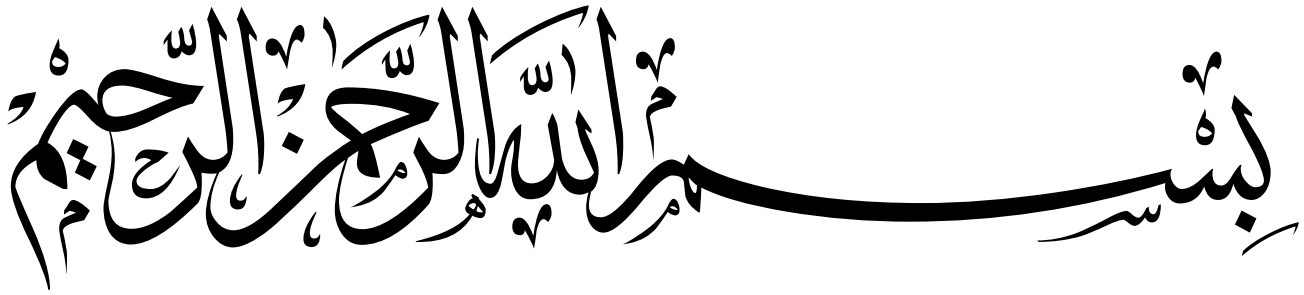
2020

Postmodern Philosophers & Their Works and Views

Extracted From Wikipedia

S. JAHANZAIB ABIDI


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Contents

Jean-François Lyotard 3

Jean Baudrillard 8

Michel Foucault 11

Francis Fukuyama 22

Jean-François Lyotard

1924–1998

Work[edit]

Lyotard's work is characterised by a persistent opposition to universals, métarécits (meta-narratives), and generality. He is fiercely critical of many of the 'universalist' claims of the Enlightenment, and several of his works serve to undermine the fundamental principles that generate these broad claims.

In his writings of the early 1970s, he rejects what he regards as theological underpinnings of both Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud: "In Freud, it is judaical, critical sombre (forgetful of the political); in Marx it is catholic. Hegelian, reconciliatory (...) in the one and in the other the relationship of the economic with meaning is blocked in the category of representation (...) Here a politics, there a therapeutics, in both cases a laical theology, on top of the arbitrariness and the roaming of forces".[21] Consequently, he rejected Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectics because he viewed them as seeking a "therapeutic resolution in the framework of a religion, here the religion of history."[22] In Lyotard's "libidinal economics" he aimed at "discovering and describing different social modes of investment of libidinal intensities".[23]

The Postmodern Condition[edit]

Lyotard is a skeptic for modern cultural thought. According to his 1979 *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, the impact of the postmodern condition was to provoke skepticism about universalizing theories. Lyotard argues that we have outgrown our needs for metanarratives (French: *grand narratives*) due to the advancement of techniques and technologies since World War II. He argues against the possibility of justifying the narratives that bring together disciplines and social practices, such as science and culture; "the narratives we tell to justify a single set of laws and stakes are inherently unjust."[24] A loss of faith in metanarratives has an effect on how we view science, art, and literature. Little narratives have now become the appropriate way for explaining social transformations and political problems. Lyotard argues that this is the driving force behind postmodern science. As metanarratives fade, science suffers a loss of faith in its search for truth, and therefore must find other ways of legitimating its efforts. Connected to this scientific legitimacy is the growing dominance for information machines. Lyotard argues that one day, in order for knowledge to be considered useful, it will have to be converted into computerized data. Years later, this led him into writing his book *The Inhuman*, published in 1988, in which he illustrates a world where technology has taken over.[25]

The collapse of the "grand narrative" and "language-games"[edit]

Most famously, in *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir (The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge)* (1979), he proposes what he calls an extreme simplification of the "postmodern" as an 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'.[26] These meta-narratives—sometimes 'grand narratives'—are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the knowability of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom. Lyotard argues that we have ceased to believe that narratives of this kind are adequate to represent and contain us all. He points out that no one seemed to agree on what, if anything, was real and everyone had their own perspective and story.[27] We have become alert to difference, diversity, the incompatibility of our aspirations, beliefs and desires, and for that reason postmodernity is characterised by an abundance of micronarratives.[28] For this concept Lyotard draws from the notion of 'language-games' found in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Lyotard notes that it is based on mapping of society according to the concept of the language games.[29]

In Lyotard's works, the term 'language games', sometimes also called 'phrase regimens', denotes the multiplicity of communities of meaning, the innumerable and incommensurable separate systems in which meanings are produced and rules for their circulation are created.[30] This involves, for example, an incredulity towards the metanarrative of human emancipation. That is, the story of how the human race has set itself free that brings together the language game of science, the language game of human historical conflicts and the language game of human qualities into the overall justification of the steady development of the human race in terms of wealth and moral well-being. According to this metanarrative, the justification of science is related to wealth and education. The development of history is seen as a steady progress towards civilization or moral well-being. The language game of human passions, qualities and faults (c.f. character flaws (narratives)), is seen as steadily shifting in favor of our qualities and away from our faults as science and historical developments help us to conquer our faults in favor of our qualities.

The point is that any event ought to be able to be understood in terms of the justifications of this metanarrative; anything that happens can be understood and judged according to the discourse of human emancipation. For example, for any new social, political or scientific revolution we could ask the question, "Is this revolution a step towards the greater well-being of the mass of human beings?" It should always be possible to answer this question in terms of the rules of justification of the metanarrative of human emancipation.[31]

This becomes more crucial in *Au juste: Conversations (Just Gaming)* (1979) and *Le Différend (The Differend)* (1983), which develop a postmodern theory of justice. It might appear that the atomisation of human beings implied by the notion of the micronarrative and the language game suggests a collapse of ethics. It has often been thought that universality is a condition for something to be a properly ethical statement: 'thou shalt not steal' is an ethical statement in a way that 'thou shalt not steal from Margaret' is not. The latter is too particular to be an ethical statement (what's so special about Margaret?); it is only ethical if it rests on a universal statement ('thou shalt not steal from anyone'). But universals are impermissible in a world that has lost faith in metanarratives, and so it would seem that ethics is impossible. Justice and injustice can only be terms within language games, and the universality of ethics is out of the window. Lyotard argues that notions of justice and injustice do in fact remain in postmodernism. The new definition of injustice is indeed to use the language rules from one 'phrase regimen' and apply them to another. Ethical behaviour is about remaining alert precisely to the threat of this injustice, about paying attention to things in their particularity and not enclosing them within abstract conceptuality. One must bear witness to the 'differend.' In a differend, there is a conflict between two parties that cannot be solved in a just manner. However, the act of being able to bridge the two and understand the claims of both parties, is the first step towards finding a solution.

"I would like to call a differend the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim. If the addressor, the addressee, and the sense of the testimony are neutralized, everything takes place as if there were no damages. A case of differend between two parties takes place when the regulation of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom."[32]

In more than one book, Lyotard promoted what he called paganism and contrasted it with both the rejection of the pagan gods in Book II of Plato's The Republic and the monotheism of Judaism. Lyotard argued that the pagan gods, unlike Platonic philosophy and monotheism, never claimed to have universal truth, but instead were better than humans because they were better at deceit and metamorphosis. Lyotard's paganism was also feminist because he argued that women, like paganism, are antirational and antiphilosophical.[33]

The Differend[edit]

In *The Differend*, based on Immanuel Kant's views on the separation of Understanding, Judgment, and Reason, Lyotard identifies the moment in which language fails as the differend, and explains it as follows: "...the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be… the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication, learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom)".[34] Lyotard undermines the common view that the meanings of phrases can be determined by what they refer to (the referent). The meaning of a phrase—an event (something happens)--cannot be fixed by appealing to reality (what actually happened). Lyotard develops this view of language by defining "reality" in an original way, as a complex of possible senses attached to a referent through a name. The correct sense of a phrase cannot be determined by a reference to reality, since the referent itself does not fix sense, and reality itself is defined as the complex of competing senses attached to a referent. Therefore, the phrase event remains indeterminate.

Lyotard uses the example of Auschwitz and the revisionist historian Robert Faurisson's demands for proof of the Holocaust to show how the differend operates as a double bind. Faurisson will only accept proof of the existence of gas chambers from eyewitnesses who were themselves victims of the gas chambers. However, any such eyewitnesses are dead and are not able to testify. Either there were no gas chambers, in which case there would be no eyewitnesses to produce evidence, or there were gas chambers, in which case there would still be no eyewitnesses to produce evidence, because they would be dead. Since Faurisson will accept no evidence for the existence of gas chambers, except the testimony of actual victims, he will conclude from both possibilities (gas chambers existed and gas chambers did not exist) that gas chambers did not exist. This presents a double bind. There are two alternatives, either there were gas chambers or there were not, which lead to the same conclusion: there were no gas chambers (and no final

solution).[35] The case is a differend because the harm done to the victims cannot be presented in the standard of judgement upheld by Faurisson.

The sublime[edit]

Lyotard was a frequent writer on aesthetic matters. He was, despite his reputation as a postmodernist, a great promoter of modernist art. Lyotard saw postmodernism as a latent tendency within thought throughout time and not a narrowly limited historical period. He favoured the startling and perplexing works of the high modernist avant-garde. In them he found a demonstration of the limits of our conceptuality, a valuable lesson for anyone too imbued with Enlightenment confidence. Lyotard has written extensively also on many contemporary artists of his choice: Valerio Adami, Daniel Buren, Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Monory, Ruth Francken, Shusaku Arakawa, Bracha Ettinger, Sam Francis, Karel Appel, Barnett Newman, René Guiffrey, Gianfranco Baruchello [fr], and Albert Ayme as well as on earlier artists, notably Paul Cézanne and Paul Klee.[36]

He developed these themes in particular by discussing the sublime. The "sublime" is a term in aesthetics whose fortunes revived under postmodernism after a century or more of neglect. It refers to the experience of pleasurable anxiety that we experience when confronting wild and threatening sights like, for example, a massive craggy mountain, black against the sky, looming terrifyingly in our vision. A sublime is the conjunction of two opposed feelings, which makes it harder for us to see the injustice of it, or a solution to it.

Lyotard found particularly interesting the explanation of the sublime offered by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* (sometimes *Critique of the Power of Judgment*). In this book, Kant explains this mixture of anxiety and pleasure in the following terms: there are two kinds of 'sublime' experience. In the 'mathematically' sublime, an object strikes the mind in such a way that we find ourselves unable to take it in as a whole. More precisely, we experience a clash between our reason (which tells us that all objects are finite) and the imagination (the aspect of the mind that organizes what we see, and which sees an object incalculably larger than ourselves, and feels infinite). In the 'dynamically' sublime, the mind recoils at an object so immeasurably more powerful than we, whose weight, force, scale could crush us without the remotest hope of our being able to resist it. (Kant stresses that if we are in *actual* danger, our feeling of anxiety is very different from that of a sublime feeling. The sublime is an aesthetic experience, not a practical feeling of personal danger.) This explains the feeling of anxiety.

What is deeply unsettling about the mathematically sublime is that the mental faculties that present visual perceptions to the mind are inadequate to the concept corresponding to it; in other words, what we are able to make ourselves see cannot fully match up to what we know is there. We know it's a mountain but we cannot take the whole thing into our perception. Our sensibility is incapable of coping with such sights, but our reason can assert the finitude of the presentation.[*citation needed*] With the dynamically sublime, our sense of physical danger should prompt an awareness that we are not just physical material beings, but moral and (in Kant's terms) noumenal beings as well. The body may be dwarfed by its power but our reason need not be. This explains, in both cases, why the sublime is an experience of pleasure as well as pain.

Lyotard is fascinated by this admission, from one of the philosophical architects of the Enlightenment, that the mind cannot always organise the world rationally. Some objects are simply incapable of being brought neatly under concepts. For Lyotard, in *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, but drawing on his argument in *The Differend*, this is a good thing. Such generalities as 'concepts' fail to pay proper attention to the particularity of things. What happens in the sublime is a crisis where we realise the inadequacy of the imagination and reason to each other. What we are witnessing, says Lyotard, is actually the differend; the straining of the mind at the edges of itself and at the edges of its conceptuality.

Libidinal Economy[edit]

In one of Lyotard's most famous books, *Libidinal Economy* he offers a critique of Marx's "false consciousness" and claims that the 19th century working class enjoyed being a part of the industrialization process. Lyotard claims that this is due to libidinal energy. The term "libidinal" coming from the term *libido* which is used to refer to the psychoanalytical desires of our deeper consciousness. Lyotard's writings in *Libidinal Economy* is an achievement in our attempts to live with the rejection of all religious and moral principles through an undermining of the structures associated with it.[37] Structures conceal libidinal intensities while intense feelings and desires force us away from set structures. However, there also can be no intensities or desires without structures, because there would be no dream of escaping the repressive structures if they do not exist. "Libidinal energy comes from this disruptive intervention of external events within structures that seek order and self-containment."[24] This was the first of Lyotard's writings that had

really criticized a Marxist view. It achieved great success, but was also the last of Lyotard's writings on this particular topic where he really went against the views of Karl Marx.

Les Immatériaux[edit]

In 1985, Lyotard co-curated the exhibition *Les Immatériaux* at the Centre de Création Industrielle of Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, together with the design theorist and curator Thierry Chaput.[38]

"Mainmise"[edit]

Lyotard was impressed by the importance of childhood in human life,[39] which he saw as providing the opportunity of creativity, as opposed to the settled hubris of maturity.[40] In "Mainmise"[41] however, he also explored the hold of childhood experience on the individual through the (Roman) concept of the Mancipium, or authoritative right of possession.[40] Because parental influences affect the new-born before it has the linguistic skill even to articulate – let alone oppose – them, Lyotard considered that "We are born from others but also to others, given over defenceless to them. Subject to their *mancipium*."[42]

Criticism[edit]

There are three major criticisms of Lyotard's work. Each coincides with a school of thought. Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy have written deconstructions of Lyotard's work (Derrida 1992; Nancy 1985).[44] They focus on Lyotard's postmodern work and on *The Differend* in particular. A differend depends upon a distinction drawn between groups that itself depends upon the heterogeneity of language games and genres of discourse. Why should these differences be privileged over an endless division and reconstruction of groups? In concentrating on specific differences, Lyotard's thought becomes overly dependent on differences; between categories that are given as fixed and well defined. From the point of view of deconstruction, Lyotard's philosophy gives too much credit to illegitimate categories and groups. Underlying any differend there is a multiplicity of further differences; some of these will involve crossing the first divide, others will question the integrity of the groups that were originally separated.[45]

Manfred Frank (1988) has put the Frankfurt School criticism best. It attacks Lyotard's search for division over consensus on the grounds that it involves a philosophical mistake with serious political and social repercussions. Lyotard has failed to notice that an underlying condition for consensus is also a condition for the successful communication of his own thought. It is a performative contradiction to give an account that appeals to our reason on behalf of a difference that is supposed to elude it. So, in putting forward a false argument against a rational consensus, Lyotard plays into the hands of the irrational forces that often give rise to injustice and differ ends. Worse, he is then only in a position to testify to that injustice, rather than put forward a just and rational resolution.[45]

From a Nietzschean and Deleuzian point of view (James Williams 2000), Lyotard's postmodern philosophy took a turn toward a destructive modern nihilism that his early work avoids. The different and the sublime are negative terms that introduce a severe pessimism at the core of Lyotard's philosophy. Both terms draw lines that cannot be crossed and yet they mark the threshold of that which is most valuable for the philosophy, that which is to be testified to and its proper concern. It is not possible repetitively to lend an ear to the sublime without falling into despair due to its fleeting nature. Whenever we try to understand or even memorize: the activity of testimony through the sublime, it can only be as something that has now dissipated and that we cannot capture.[45]

Charles J. Stivale, of Wayne State University, wrote a critique of Lyotard's *The Differend* for *The French Review*, in 1990. In it, he states: "Jean-François Lyotard's is a dense work of philosophical, political and ethical reflection aimed at a specialized audience versed in current debates in logic, pragmatics and post-structuralism. Even George Van Den Abbeele's excellent translation, complete with a glossary of French terms not available in the original text (Paris: Minuit, 1983), does not, indeed cannot, alleviate the often terse prose with which Lyotard develops his reasoning. With this said, I must also observe that this work is of vital importance in a period when revisionism of all stripes attempts to rewrite, and often simply deny, the occurrence of historical and cultural events, i.e. in attempting to reconstruct 'reality" in the convenient names of "truth" and "common sense" … This overview must leave unexplored the broad philosophical bases from which Lyotard draws support, as well as important questions that he raises regarding history, justice and critical judgement. I can conclude only by suggesting that this work, despite the formidable difficulties inherent to its carefully articulated arguments, offers readers a rich formulation of precise questions for and about the current period of critical transition and re-opening in philosophy, ethics and aesthetics."[46]

1. *Lyotard, Jean-François (1974). "Adorno as the Devil". Telos (19): 134–5.*
2. ^ *Lyotard, Jean-François (1974). "Adorno as the Devil". Telos (19): 126.*
3. ^ *Hurley, Robert (1974). "Introduction to Lyotard". Telos (19): 124.*
4. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] Williams, James. 2002. "Jean-Francois Lyotard", pp. 210–214, in *Key Contemporary Social Theorists* by Anthony Elliott and Larry Ray. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
5. ^ Parker, Noel and Sim, Stuart. 1997. "Lyotard, Jean Francois (1924–)", pp. 205–208, in *The A-Z Guide to Modern Social and Political Theorists*, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.
6. ^ *Lyotard, Jean-François (1979). La Condition Postmoderne: Rapport sur le Savoir. Les Editions de Minuit. p. 7.*
7. ^ Lemert, Charles C.. "After Modern." Social theory: the multicultural and classic readings.1993. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 456.
8. ^ Micronarratives Archived 2011-06-29 at the Wayback Machine
9. ^ Elliott, Anthony, and Larry J. Ray. "Jean Francois Lyotard." Key contemporary social theorists. 2003. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 211.
10. ^ Lyotard, Jean-François (1984). *The Postmodern Condition.* 1st ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Print. pp. 66–67.
11. ^ Williams, James (1998). *Lyotard: Toward a Postmodern Philosophy.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc, Print. p.32-33.
12. ^ *Lyotard, Jean-François (1988). The Differend: Phrases in Dispute. University of Minnesota Press. pp. 9. ISBN 0-8166-1610-8.*
13. ^ The Ennobling of Democracy: The Challenge of the Postmodern Age p. 29-31]
14. ^ Lyotard, Jean-François (1988). *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Print. p. 13.
15. ^ Lyotard, Jean-François (1988). *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Print. pp. 16–17.
16. ^ *Lyotard, Jean-Francois (2009–2013). Writings on Contemporary Art and Artists (7 volumes ed.). Leuven University Press. ISBN 9789058678867.*
17. ^ Lemert, Charles. 2013. "The Idea of the Postmodern" Pp. 465–468 in Social Theory: The Multicultural, Global, and Classic Readings, Westview Press. Boulder, CO.
18. ^ *Hui, Yuk; Broeckmann, Andreas, eds. (2015). 30 Years after Les Immatériaux: Art, Science, and Theory (PDF). Lüneburg: Meson Press. p. 9. Retrieved 12 February2019.*
19. ^ J-F Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children* (London 1992) p. 112
20. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] R Shields ed., *Rereading Jean-Francois Lyotard* (2016) p 142
21. ^ *Lyotard, Jean-François (1992). "Mainmise". Philosophy Today.* ***36*** *(4): 419–427.*
22. ^ Quoted in K Still ed., *Minima Memoria* (Stanford 2007) p. 202
23. ^ *Tomb of Jean-François Lyotard, retrieved 2017-11-05*
24. ^ Derrida, Jacques. 2005. *On Touching, Jean-Luc-Nancy*, Stanford University Press.
25. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] Elliott, Anthony, and Larry J. Ray. "Jean Francois Lyotard." Key contemporary social theorists.2003. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 214.
26. ^ Stivale, Charles J (1990). "The French Review." Print. Pp. 722–723.
27. ^ *Badiou, Alain (July 2009). "A Note on the Texts". Pocket Pantheon: Figures of Postwar Philosophy. Verso. p. 193. ISBN 978-1-84467-357-5.*
28. ^ Elliott, Anthony, and Larry J. Ray. "Jean Francois Lyotard." Key contemporary social theorists.2003. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 35.

Jean Baudrillard

1929-2007

Key concepts[edit]

Baudrillard's published work emerged as part of a generation of French thinkers including: Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan who all shared an interest in semiotics, and he is often seen as a part of the post-structuralist philosophical school.[16] In common with many post-structuralists, his arguments consistently draw upon the notion that signification and meaning are both only understandable in terms of how particular words or "signs" interrelate. Baudrillard thought, as do many post-structuralists, that meaning is brought about through *systems* of signs working together. Following on from the structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, Baudrillard argued that meaning (value) is created through difference—through what something is not (so "dog" means "dog" because it is not-"cat", not-"goat", not-"tree", etc.). In fact, he viewed meaning as near enough self-referential: objects, images of objects, words and signs are situated in a web of meaning; one object's meaning is only understandable through its relation to the meaning of other objects; for instance, one thing's prestige relates to another's mundanity.

From this starting point Baudrillard theorized broadly about human society based upon this kind of self-referentiality. His writing portrays societies always searching for a sense of meaning—or a "total" understanding of the world—that remains consistently elusive. In contrast to Post-structuralism (such as Michel Foucault), for whom the formations of knowledge emerge only as the result of relations of power, Baudrillard developed theories in which the excessive, fruitless search for total knowledge leads almost inevitably to a kind of delusion. In Baudrillard's view, the (human) subject may try to understand the (non-human) object, but because the object can only be understood according to what it signifies (and because the process of signification immediately involves a web of other signs from which it is distinguished) this never produces the desired results. The subject is, rather, *seduced* (in the original Latin sense, *seducere*, 'to lead away') by the object. He argued therefore that, in final analysis, a complete understanding of the minutiae of human life is impossible, and when people are seduced into thinking otherwise they become drawn toward a "simulated" version of reality, or, to use one of his neologisms, a state of "hyperreality". This is not to say that the world becomes unreal, but rather that the faster and more comprehensive societies begin to bring reality together into one supposedly coherent picture, the more insecure and unstable it looks and the more fearful societies become.[17] Reality, in this sense, "dies out."[18]

Accordingly, Baudrillard argued that the excess of signs and of meaning in late 20th century "global" society had caused (quite paradoxically) an effacement of reality. In this world neither liberal nor Marxist utopias are any longer believed in. We live, he argued, not in a "global village", to use Marshall McLuhan's phrase, but rather in a world that is ever more easily petrified by even the smallest event. Because the "global" world operates at the level of the exchange of signs and commodities, it becomes ever more blind to *symbolic* acts such as, for example, terrorism. In Baudrillard's work the symbolic realm (which he develops a perspective on through the anthropological work of Marcel Mauss and Georges Bataille) is seen as quite distinct from that of signs and signification. Signs can be exchanged like commodities; symbols, on the other hand, operate quite differently: they are exchanged, like gifts, sometimes violently as a form of potlatch. Baudrillard, particularly in his later work, saw the "global" society as without this "symbolic" element, and therefore symbolically (if not militarily) defenseless against acts such as the Rushdie Fatwa[19] or, indeed, the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States and its military and economic establishment.

The object value system[edit]

In his early books, such as *The System of Objects*, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, and *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard's main focus is upon consumerism, and how different objects are consumed in different ways. At this time Baudrillard's political outlook was loosely associated with Marxism (and Situationism), but in these books he differed from Karl Marx in one significant way. For Baudrillard, as for the situationists, it was consumption rather than production that was the main driver of capitalist society.

Baudrillard came to this conclusion by criticising Marx's concept of "use-value". Baudrillard thought that both Marx's and Adam Smith's economic thought accepted the idea of genuine needs relating to genuine uses too easily and too simply. Baudrillard argued, drawing from Georges Bataille, that needs are constructed, rather than innate. He stressed that all purchases, because they always signify something *socially*, have

their fetishistic side. Objects always, drawing from Roland Barthes, "say something" about their users. And this was, for him, why consumption was and remains more important than production: because the "ideological genesis of needs" precedes the production of goods to meet those needs.[20]:63

He wrote that there are four ways of an object obtaining value. The four value-making processes are:[20]

1. The ***functional*** value: an object's instrumental purpose (use value). Example: a pen writes; a refrigerator cools.
2. The ***exchange*** value: an object's economic value. Example: One pen may be worth three pencils, while one refrigerator may be worth the salary earned by three months of work.
3. The ***symbolic*** value: an object's value assigned by a subject *in relation to another subject* (i.e., between a giver and receiver). Example: a pen might symbolize a student's school graduation gift or a commencement speaker's gift; or a diamond may be a symbol of publicly declared marital love.
4. The ***sign*** value: an object's value within a *system* of objects. Example: a particular pen may, while having no added functional benefit, signify prestige relative to another pen; a diamond ring may have no function at all, but may suggest particular social values, such as taste or class.

Baudrillard's earlier books were attempts to argue that the first two of these values are not simply associated, but are disrupted by the third and, particularly, the fourth. Later, Baudrillard rejected Marxism totally[*citation needed*] (*The Mirror of Production* and *Symbolic Exchange and Death*). But the focus on the difference between sign value (which relates to commodity exchange) and symbolic value (which relates to Maussian gift exchange) remained in his work up until his death. Indeed, it came to play a more and more important role, particularly in his writings on world events.

Simulacra and Simulation[edit]

Main article: Simulacra and Simulation

As Baudrillard developed his work throughout the 1980s, he moved from economic theory to mediation and mass communication. Although retaining his interest in Saussurean semiotics and the logic of symbolic exchange (as influenced by anthropologist Marcel Mauss), Baudrillard turned his attention to the work of Marshall McLuhan, developing ideas about how the nature of social relations is determined by the forms of communication that a society employs. In so doing, Baudrillard progressed beyond both Saussure's and Roland Barthes's formal semiology to consider the implications of a historically understood version of structural semiology.

Simulation, Baudrillard claims, is the current stage of the simulacrum: all is composed of references with no referents, a hyperreality.[21] Progressing historically from the Renaissance, in which the dominant simulacrum was in the form of the counterfeit—mostly people or objects appearing to stand for a real referent (for instance, royalty, nobility, holiness, etc.) that does not exist, in other words, in the spirit of pretense, in dissimulating others that a person or a thing does not really "have it"—to the Industrial Revolution, in which the dominant simulacrum is the product, the series, which can be propagated on an endless production line; and finally to current times, in which the dominant simulacrum is the model, which by its nature already stands for endless reproducibility, and is itself already reproduced.

The end of history and meaning[edit]

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, one of Baudrillard's most common themes was historicity, or, more specifically, how present-day societies utilise the notions of progress and modernity in their political choices. He argued, much like the political theorist Francis Fukuyama, that history had ended or "vanished" with the spread of globalization; but, unlike Fukuyama, Baudrillard averred that this end should not be understood as the culmination of history's progress, but as the collapse of the very *idea* of historical progress. For Baudrillard, the end of the Cold War did not represent an ideological victory; rather, it signaled the disappearance of utopian visions shared between both the political Right and Left. Giving further evidence of his opposition toward Marxist visions of global communism and liberal visions of global civil society, Baudrillard contended that the ends they hoped for had always been illusions; indeed, as *The Illusion of the End* argues, he thought the idea of an end itself was nothing more than a misguided dream:

The end of history is, alas, also the end of the dustbins of history. There are no longer any dustbins for disposing of old ideologies, old regimes, old values. Where are we going to throw Marxism, which actually invented the dustbins of history? (Yet there is some justice here since the very people who invented them have fallen in.) Conclusion: if there are no more dustbins of history, this is because History itself has become a dustbin. It has become its own dustbin, just as the planet itself is becoming its own dustbin.[22]

Within a society subject to and ruled by fast-paced electronic communication and global information networks the collapse of this façade was always going to be, he thought, inevitable. Employing a quasi-scientific vocabulary that attracted the ire of the physicist Alan Sokal, Baudrillard wrote that the speed society moved at had destabilized the linearity of history: "we have the particle accelerator that has smashed the referential orbit of things once and for all".[23]

In making this argument Baudrillard found some affinity with the postmodern philosophy of Jean-François Lyotard, who argued that in the late 20th century there was no longer any room for "metanarratives." (The triumph of a coming communism being one such metanarrative.) But, in addition to simply lamenting this collapse of history, Baudrillard also went beyond Lyotard and attempted to analyse how the idea of positive progress was being employed in spite of the notion's declining validity. Baudrillard argued that although genuine belief in a universal endpoint of history, wherein all conflicts would find their resolution, had been deemed redundant, universality was still a notion utilised in world politics as an excuse for actions. Universal values which, according to him, no one any longer believed universal were and are still rhetorically employed to justify otherwise unjustifiable choices. The means, he wrote, are there even though the ends are no longer believed in, and are employed in order to hide the present's harsh realities (or, as he would have put it, unrealities). "In the Enlightenment, universalization was viewed as unlimited growth and forward progress. Today, by contrast, universalization is expressed as a forward *escape*."[24] This involves the notion of "escape velocity" as outlined in *The Vital Illusion* (2000), which in turn, results in the postmodern *fallacy of escape velocity* on which the postmodern mind and critical view cannot, by definition, ever truly break free from the all-encompassing "self-referential" sphere of discourse.

1. Peter Pericles Trifonas, *Barthes and the Empire of Signs*, Icon (2001).
2. ^ see here Baudrillard's final major publication in English, *The Intelligence of Evil*, where he discussed the political fallout of what he calls "Integral Reality"
3. ^ Baudrillard, Jean. 1985. *The Perfect Crime*. London: Verso Books.
4. ^ see here *The Transparency of Evil*, Verso (1993)
5. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] Baudrillard, Jean. 1983. *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. London: Verso Books. ISBN 9781788734844.
6. ^ *Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations: I. The Precession of Simulacra". European Graduate School. Translated by S. F. Glaser. Archived from the original on 29 July 2010.*
7. ^ *Baudrillard, Jean (1994). The Illusion of the End. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press. p. 263. ISBN 978-0804725019.*
8. ^ *The Illusion of the End*, p. 2.
9. ^ Baudrillard, Jean. "The Violence of the Global", translated by F. Debrix. *European Graduate School*. Archived from the original on 27 May 2010.

Michel Foucault

1926–1984

Philosophical work[edit]

See also: Michel Foucault bibliography

Foucault's colleague Pierre Bourdieu summarized the philosopher's thought as "a long exploration of transgression, of going beyond social limits, always inseparably linked to knowledge and power."[184]

The theme that underlies all Foucault's work is the relationship between power and knowledge, and how the former is used to control and define the latter. What authorities claim as 'scientific knowledge' are really just means of social control. Foucault shows how, for instance, in the eighteenth century 'madness' was used to categorize and stigmatize not just the mentally ill but the poor, the sick, the homeless and, indeed, anyone whose expressions of individuality were unwelcome.

— Philip Stokes, Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers (2004)[185]

Philosopher Philip Stokes of the University of Reading noted that overall, Foucault's work was "dark and pessimistic." Though it does, however, leave some room for optimism, in that it illustrates how the discipline of philosophy can be used to highlight areas of domination. In doing so, as Stokes claimed, the ways in which we are being dominated become better understood, so that we may strive to build social structures that minimise this risk of domination.[185] In all of this development there had to be close attention to detail; it is the detail which eventually individualizes people.[186]

Later in his life, Foucault explained that his work was less about analyzing power as a phenomenon than about trying to characterize the different ways in which contemporary society has expressed the use of power to "objectivise subjects." These have taken three broad forms: one involving scientific authority to classify and 'order' knowledge about human populations; the second has been to categorize and 'normalise' human subjects (by identifying madness, illness, physical features, and so on); and the third relates to the manner in which the impulse to fashion sexual identities and train one's own body to engage in routines and practices ends up reproducing certain patterns within a given society.[187]

Literature[edit]

In addition to his philosophical work, Foucault also wrote on literature. *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel,* published in 1963 and translated in English in 1986, is Foucault's only book-length work on literature. He would describe it as "by far the book I wrote most easily, with the greatest pleasure, and most rapidly."[188] Foucault explores theory, criticism, and psychology with reference to the texts of Raymond Roussel, one of the first notable experimental writers. Foucault also gave a lecture responding to Roland Barthes' famous essay "The Death of the Author" entitled "What Is An Author?" in 1969, later published in full.[189] According to literary theoretician Kornelije Kvas, for Foucault, "denying the existence of a historical author on account of his/ her irrelevance for interpretation is absurd, for the author is a function of the text that organizes its sense."[190]

Theory of power[edit]

Foucault's analysis of power comes in two forms: empirical and theoretical. The empirical analyses concern themselves with historical (and modern) forms of power and how these emerged from previous forms of power. Foucault describes three types of power in his empirical analyses: *sovereign* power, *disciplinary* power, and *biopower*.[191]

Foucault is generally critical to "theories" that try to give absolute answers to "everything." Therefore, he considered his own "theory" of power to be closer to a method than a typical "theory." According to Foucault, most people misunderstand power. For this reason, he makes clear that power cannot be completely described as:[191]

- A group of institutions and/or mechanisms whose aim it is for a citizen to obey and yield to the state (a typical liberal definition of power);[191]
- Yielding to rules (a typical psychoanalytical definition of power);[191] or
- A general and oppressing system where one societal class or group oppresses another (a typical feminist or Orthodox Marxist definition of power).[191]

Foucault is not critical of considering these phenomena as "power", but claims that these theories of power cannot completely describe *all* forms of power. Foucault also claims that liberal definition of power has effectively hidden other forms of power to the extent that people have uncritically accepted them.[191]

Foucault's own theory of power begins on micro-level, with singular "force relations". Richard A. Lynch defines Foucault's concept of "force relation" as "whatever in one's social interactions that pushes, urges or compels one to do something."[192] According to Foucault, force relations are an effect of difference, inequality or unbalance that exists in other forms of relationships (such as sexual or economic). Force, and power, is however not something that a person or group "holds" (such as in the sovereign definition of power), instead power is a complex group of forces that comes from "everything" and therefore exists everywhere. That relations of power always result from inequality, difference or unbalance also means that power always has a goal or purpose. Power comes in two forms: tactics and strategies. Tactics is power on the micro-level, which can for example be how a person chooses to express themselves through their clothes. Strategies on the other hand, is power on macro-level, which can be the state of fashion at any moment. Strategies consist of a combination of tactics. At the same time, power is non-subjective according to Foucault. This posits a paradox, according to Lynch, since "someone" has to exert power, while at the same time there can be no "someone" exerting this power.[191] According to Lynch this paradox can be solved with two observations:

- By looking at power as something which reaches further than the influence of single people or groups. Even if individuals and groups try to influence fashion, for example, their actions will often get unexpected consequences.[191]
- Even if individuals and groups have a free choice, they are also affected and limited by their context/situation.[191]

According to Foucault, force relations are constantly changing, constantly interacting with other force relations which may weaken, strengthen or change one another. Foucault writes that power always includes resistance, which means there is always a possibility that power and force relations will change in some way. According to Richard A. Lynch, the purpose of Foucault's theory of power is to increase peoples' awareness of how power has shaped their way of being, thinking and acting, and by increasing this awareness making it possible for them to change their way of being, thinking and acting.[191]

Sovereign power[edit]

With "sovereign power" Foucault alludes to a power structure that is similar to a pyramid, where one person or a group of people (at the top of the pyramid) holds the power, while the "normal" (and oppressed) people are at the bottom of the pyramid. In the middle parts of the pyramid are the people who enforce the sovereign's orders. A typical example of sovereign power is absolute monarchy.[191]

In historical absolute monarchies, crimes has been considered as a personal offense against the sovereign and his/her power. The punishment was often public and spectacular, partly to deter others from committing crimes, but also to reinstate the sovereign's power. This was however both expensive and ineffective – it led far too often to people sympathizing with the criminal. In modern times, when disciplinary power is dominant, criminals are instead subjected to various disciplinary techniques in order to "remold" the criminal into a "law abiding citizen".[193]

According to Chloë Taylor, a characteristic for sovereign power is that the sovereign has the right to take life, wealth, services, labor and products. The sovereign has a right to subtract – to take life, to enslave life, etc. – but not the right to control life in the way that later happens in disciplinary systems of power. According to Taylor, the form of power that the philosopher Thomas Hobbes is concerned about, is sovereign power. According to Hobbes, people are "free" so long they are not literally placed in chains.[194]

Disciplinary power[edit]

What Foucault calls "disciplinary power" aims to use bodies' skills as effectively as possible.[195] The more useful the body becomes, the more obedient it also has to become. The purpose of this is not only to use the bodies' skills, but also prevent these skills from being used to revolt against the power.[195]

Disciplinary power has "individuals" as its object, target and instrument. According to Foucault, "individual" is however a construct created by disciplinary power.[195] The disciplinary power's techniques create a "rational self-control",[196] which in practice means that the disciplinary power is internalized and therefore

doesn't continuously need external force. Foucault says that disciplinary power is primarily not an oppressing form of power, but rather so a productive form of power. Disciplinary power doesn't oppress interests or desires, but instead subjects bodies to reconstructed patterns of behavior in order to reconstruct their thoughts, desires and interests. According to Foucault this happens in factories, schools, hospitals and prisons.[197] Disciplinary power creates a certain type of individual by producing new movements, habits and skills. It focuses on details, single movements, their timing and speed. It organizes bodies in time and space, and controls every movement for maximal effect. It uses rules, surveillance, exams and controls.[197] The activities follow certain plans, whose purpose it is to lead the bodies to certain pre-determined goals. The bodies are also combined with each other, in order to reach a productivity that is greater than the sum of all bodies activities.[195]

Disciplinary power has according to Foucault been especially successful due to its usage of three technologies: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and exams.[195] By hierarchical observation, the bodies become constantly visible to the power. The observation is hierarchical since there is not a single observer, but rather so a "hierarchy" of observers. An example of this is mental asylums during the 19th century, when the psychiatrist was not the only observer, but also nurses and auxiliary staff. From these observations and scientific discourses, a norm is established and used to judge the observed bodies. For the disciplinary power to continue to exist, this judgement has to be normalized. Foucault mentions several characteristics of this judgement: (1) all deviations, even small ones, from correct behavior are punished, (2) repeated rule violations are punished extra, (3) exercises are used as a behavior correcting technique and punishment, (4) rewards are used together with punishment to establish a hierarchy of good and bad behavior/people, (5) rank/grades/etc. are used as punishment and reward. Examinations combine the hierarchical observation with judgement. Exams objectivity and individualize the observed bodies by creating extensive documentation about every observed body. The purpose of the exams is therefore to gather further information about each individual, track their development and compare their results to the norm.[195]

According to Foucault, the "formula" for disciplinary power can be seen in philosopher Jeremy Bentham's plan for the "optimal prison": the panopticon. Such a prison consists of a circle-formed building where every cell is inhabited by only one prisoner. In every cell there are two windows – one to let in light from outside and one pointing to the middle of the circle-formed building. In this middle there is a tower where a guard can be placed to observe the prisoners. Since the prisoners will never be able to know whether they are being watched or not at a given moment, they will internalize the disciplinary power and regulate their own behavior (*as if* they were constantly being watched). Foucault says this construction (1) creates an individuality by separating prisoners from each other in the physical room, (2) since the prisoners cannot know if they are being watched at any given moment, they internalize the disciplinary power and regulate their own behavior as if they were always watched, (3) the surveillance makes it possible to create extensive documentation about each prisoner and their behavior. According to Foucault the panopticon has been used as a model also for other disciplinary institutions, such as mental asylums in the 19th century.[195]

F. W. Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* [edit]

See also: Taylorism

Marcelo Hoffman posits that an example of disciplinary power can be seen in Frederick Winslow Taylor's book *The Principles of Scientific Management*. Taylor's purpose was to increase the efficacy of workers by having their behavior controlled by the company's management. He mentions as an example an attempt to increase the amount of pig iron carried by each worker during a day from 12,5 tonnes to 47 tonnes, without causing the workers to strike. Here, Hoffman says, is a clear example of how the disciplinary power tries to make the body more obedient the more useful it becomes. Taylor describes that he started out with observing his 75 workers to pick out the most skilled workers. He had studied the workers history, character, habits and ambitions. Here is an example of how the disciplinary power creates an individuality. One of the selected workers, "Schmidt", was according to Taylor a man with high ambitions that valued a high salary. Schmidt accepted the terms given: He would earn 61% more if he agreed to obey without protest the orders given to him by an appointed instructor. Schmidt was thereafter observed and controlled in every detail of his working day – he was told when and how to work, when to rest, etc. According to Taylor, Schmidt never failed to obey during the three years during which he was subjected to this detailed control and higher workload.[195]

Another example mentioned by Taylor is taken from a different industry, where Taylor had calculated the "optimal" workload for each worker. There Taylor had developed a system where every worker was not only continuously observed, but also punished if they had failed to reach up to the daily quota the previous workday. Every day the workers received a yellow or white note at the end of each shift, where yellow notes were given to those who had not reached the daily quota. Those who were given yellow notes were then threatened with redeployment to a "working role better fit for their productive capacities", which according to Taylor effectively led the workers to work harder. According to Taylor, the workers who were given yellow

notes were not immediately redeployed. Instead, Taylor writes that a "skilled teacher" were sent to teach the workers how to do the work properly. The teachers job was however not only to "teach" the workers how to work more effectively, but also to observe them and their working capacity. Besides this teacher, Taylor also describes that the workers were observed by others, such as administrators, managers, etc.[195]

Biopower[edit]

Further information: Biopower

With "biopower" Foucault refers to power over *bios* (life) – power over populations. Biopower primarily rests on norms which are internalized by people, rather than external force. It encourages, strengthens, controls, observes, optimizes and organize the forces below it. Foucault has sometimes described biopower as separate from disciplinary power, but at other times he has described disciplinary power as an expression of biopower. Biopower can use disciplinary techniques, but in contrast to disciplinary power its target is populations rather than individuals.[194]

Biopower studies populations regarding (for example) number of births, life expectancy, public health, housing, migration, crime, which social groups are over-represented in deviations from the norm (regarding health, crime, etc.) and try to adjust, control or eliminate these norm-deviations. One example is the age distribution in a population. Biopower is interested in age distribution in order to compensate for future (or current) lacks of labor power, retirement homes, etc. Yet another example is sex: because sex is connected to population-growth, sex and sexuality have been of great interest to biopower. On a disciplinary level, people who engaged in non-reproductive sexual acts have been treated for psychiatric diagnoses such as "perversion", "frigidity" and "sexual dysfunction". On a biopower-level, the usage of contraceptives has been studied, some social groups have (by various means) been encouraged to have children, while others (such as poor, sick, unmarried women, criminals or people with disability) have been discouraged or prevented from having children.[194]

In the era of biopower, death has become a scandal and a catastrophe, but despite this biopower has according to Foucault killed more people than any other form of power has ever done before it. Under sovereign power, the sovereign king could kill people to exert his power or start wars simply to extend his kingdom, but during the era of biopower wars have instead been motivated by an ambition to "protect life itself". Similar motivations has also been used for genocide. For example, Nazi Germany motivated its attempt to eradicate Jews, the mentally ill and disabled with the motivation that Jews were "a threat to the German health", and that the money spent on healthcare for mentally ill and disabled would be better spent on "viable Germans". Chloë Taylor also mentions the Iraq War was motivated by similar tenets. The motivation was at first that Iraq was thought to have weapons of mass destruction and connections to Al-Qaeda. However, when the Bush- and Blair-administrations didn't find any evidence to support either of these theories, the motivation for the war was changed. In the new motivation, the cause of the war was said to be that Saddam Hussein had committed crimes against his own population. Taylor means that in modern times, war has to be "concealed" under a rhetoric of humanitarian aid, despite the fact that these wars often cause humanitarian crises.[194]

During the 19th-century, slums were increasing in number and size across the western world. Criminality, illness, alcoholism and prostitution was common in these areas, and the middle class considered the people who lived in these slums as "unmoral" and "lazy". The middle class also feared that this underclass sooner or later would "take over" because the population growth was greater in these slums than it was in the middle class. This fear gave rise to the scientific study of eugenics, whose founder Francis Galton had been inspired by Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection. According to Galton, society was preventing natural selection by helping "the weak", thus causing a spread of the "negative qualities" into the rest of the population.[194]

Theory of the body and sexuality[edit]

According to Foucault, the body is not something objective that stands outside of history and culture. Instead, Foucault argues, the body has been and is continuously shaped by society and history – by work, diet, body ideals, exercise, medical interventions, etc. Foucault presents no "theory" of the body, but does write about it in *Discipline and Punish* as well as in *The History of Sexuality*. Foucault was critical of all purely biological explanations of phenomena such as sexuality, madness and criminality. Further, Foucault argues, that the body is not sufficient as a basis for self-understanding and understanding of others.[197]

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows how power and the body are tied together, for example by the disciplinary power primarily focusing on individual bodies and their behavior. Foucault argues that power, by

manipulating bodies/behavior, also manipulates people's minds. Foucault turns the common saying "the body is the prison of the soul" and instead posits that "the soul is the prison of the body."[197]

According to Foucault, sexology has tried to exert itself as a "science" by referring to the material (the body). In contrast to this, Foucault argues that sexology is a pseudoscience, and that "sex" is a pseudo-scientific idea. For Foucault the idea of a natural, biologically grounded and fundamental sexuality is a normative historical construct that has also been used as an instrument of power. By describing sex as the biological and fundamental cause to peoples' gender identity, sexual identity and sexual behavior, power has effectively been able to normalize sexual and gendered behavior. This has made it possible to evaluate, pathologize and "correct" peoples' sexual and gendered behavior, by comparing bodies behaviors to the constructed "normal" behavior. For Foucault, a "normal sexuality" is as much of a construct as a "natural sexuality". Therefore, Foucault was also critical of the popular discourse that dominated the debate over sexuality during the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, the popular discourse argued for a "liberation" of sexuality from a cultural, moral and capitalistic oppression. Foucault, however, argues that peoples' opinions about and experiences of sexuality are *always* a result of cultural and power mechanisms. To "liberate" sexuality from one group of norms only means that another group of norms takes it place. This, however, does not mean that Foucault considers resistance to be futile. What Foucault argues for is rather that it is impossible to become completely free from power, and that there is simply no "natural" sexuality. Power always involves a dimension of resistance, and therefore also a possibility for change. Although Foucault considers it impossible to step outside of power-networks, it is always possible to change these networks or navigate them differently.[197]

According to Foucault, the body is not only an "obedient and passive object" that is dominated by discourses and power. The body is also the "seed" to resistance against dominant discourses and power techniques. The body is never fully compliant, and experiences can never fully be reduced to linguistic descriptions. There is always a possibility to experience something that is not possible to describe with words, and in this discrepancy there is also a possibility for resistance against dominant discourses.[197]

Foucault's view of the historical construction of the body has influenced many feminist and queer-theorists. According to Johanna Oksala, Foucault's influence on queer theory has been so great than he can be considered one of the founders of queer theory. The fundamental idea behind queer theory is that there is no natural fundament that lies behind identities such as gay, lesbian, heterosexual, etc. Instead these identities are considered cultural constructions that have been constructed through normative discourses and relations of power. Feminists has with the help of Foucault's ideas studied different ways that women form their bodies: through plastic surgery, diet, eating disorders, etc. Foucault's historization of sex has also affected feminist theorists such as Judith Butler, who used Foucault's theories about the relation between subject, power and sex to question gendered subjects. Butler follows Foucault by saying that there is no "true" gender behind gender identity that constitutes its biological and objective fundament. However, Butler is critical of Foucault. She argues Foucault "naively" presents bodies and pleasures as a ground for resistance against power, without extending his historization of sexuality to gendered subjects/bodies. Foucault has received criticism from other feminists, such as Susan Bordo and Kate Soper.[197]

Johanna Oksala argues that Foucault, by saying that sex/sexuality are constructs, doesn't deny the existence of sexuality. Oksala also argues that the goal of critical theories such as Foucault is not to liberate the body and sexuality from oppression, but rather so question and deny the identities that are posited as "natural" and "essential" by showing how these identities are historical and cultural constructions.[197]

Theory of subjectivity[edit]

Foucault considered his primary project to be the investigation of how people through history has been made into "subjects."[198] Subjectivity, for Foucault, is not a state of being, but a practice – an active "being."[199] According to Foucault, "the subject" has, by western philosophers, usually been considered as something given; natural and objective. On the contrary, Foucault considers subjectivity to be a construction created by power.[198] Foucault talks of "assujettissement", which is a French term that for Foucault refers to a process where power creates subjects while also oppressing them using social norms. For Foucault "social norms" are standards that people are encouraged to follow, that are also used to compare and define people. As an example of "assujettissement", Foucault mentions "homosexual", a historically contingent type of subjectivity that was created by sexology. Foucault writes that sodomy was previously considered a serious sexual deviation, but a temporary one. Homosexuality, however, became a "species", a past, a childhood and a type of life. "Homosexuals" has by the same power that created this subjectivity been discriminated against, due to homosexuality being considered as a deviation from the "normal" sexuality. However, Foucault argues, the creation of a subjectivity such as "homosexuality" does not only have negative

consequences for the people who are subjectivised – the subjectivity of homosexuality has also led to the creation of gay bars and the pride parade.[200]

According to Foucault, scientific discourses have played an important role in the disciplinary power system, by classifying and categorizing people, observing their behavior and "treating" them when their behavior has been considered "abnormal". He defines discourse as a form of oppression that does not require physical force. He identifies its production as “controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures”, which are driven by individuals’ aspiration of knowledge to create “rules” and “systems” that translate into social codes.[201] Moreover, discourse creates a force that extends beyond societal institutions and could be found in social and formal fields such as health care systems, educational and law enforcement. The formation of these fields may seem to contribute to social development; however, Foucault warns against discourses' harmful aspects on society.

Sciences such as psychiatry, biology, medicine, economy, psychoanalysis, psychology, sociology, ethnology, pedagogy and criminology have all categorized behaviors as rational, irrational, normal, abnormal, human, inhuman, etc. By doing so, they have all created various types of subjectivity and norms,[196] which are then internalized by people as "truths". People have then adapted their behavior in order to get closer to what these sciences has labeled as "normal".[197] For example, Foucault claims that psychological observation/surveillance and psychological discourses has created a type of psychology-centered subjectivity, which has led to people considering unhappiness a fault in their psychology rather than in society. This has also, according to Foucault, been a way for society to resist criticism – criticism against society has been turned against the individual and their psychological health.[193]

Obesity as a form of subjectivity[edit]

Cressida J. Heyes argues that a modern example of subjectivity is obesity. Subjects are created in two levels: by biopower and by disciplinary power. Biopower has during the 21th-century considered obesity as a "corruption in the body politics" and a "public health catastrophe". Heyes argues that during the 21th century there has been an anti-obesity discourse that has been enabled by population statistics and public health campaigns. These expressions of bio power, however, relies on disciplinary power, for example by health care institutions gathering information about individuals weight, length, age, etc. that is then used by biopower. The biopower tries to reduce the *populations'* deviance from the weight-norm, and disciplinary power tries to reduce the *individuals'* deviance from the weight-norm. Biopower and disciplinary power thus create various forms of subjectivity: obesity, underweight, normal weight, and so on. To be obese is not simply a question of where the individual lies in relation to the weight-norm, but it is also considered a marker for the individuals incapacity to regulate their own weight and behavior. This becomes the case not only through the disciplinary institutions (such as health care institutions) exertion of power, but also by a "confession discourse" where people are encouraged and expected to "confess" their consumption habits, weight, fat percentage, exercising habits, etc. Heyes argues that a modern-day example of this can be seen in online forums centered around weight and weight-loss. These forums contain, according to Heyes, profiles where every individual describes their starting weight, current weight and goal weight. Another example of this that Heyes mentions is video-blogs where people create a "biography" centered around their "weight-loss-journey". In these ways people also constitute their own subjectivity. However, as with other forms of subjectivity, Heyes argues that these people also experience benefits from constituting themselves as "obese people". According to Heyes, these people can feel better, learn new things (about nutrition, for example) and acquire new skills. At the same time, Heyes argues, by accepting this subjectivity people are dragged deeper into a disciplinary power system.[200]

Subjectivity constituted by individuals in relation to themselves[edit]

According to Foucault, subjectivity is not necessarily something that is forced upon people externally – it is also something that is established in a person's relation to themselves.[199] This can, for example, happen when a person is trying to "find themselves" or "be themselves", something Edward McGushin describes as a typical modern activity. In this quest for the "true self", the self is established in two levels: as a passive object (the "true self" that is searched for) and as an active "searcher". The ancient Cynics and the 19th-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche posited that the "true self" can only be found by going through great hardship and/or danger. The ancient Stoics and 17th-century philosopher René Descartes, however, argued that the "self" can be found by quiet and solitary introspection. Yet another example is Socrates, who argued that self-awareness can only be found by having debates with others, where the debaters question each other's foundational views and opinions. Foucault, however, argued that "subjectivity" is a process, rather than a state of being. As such, Foucault argued that there is no "true self" to be found. Rather so, the "self" is constituted/created in activities such as the ones employed to "find" the "self". In other words, exposing oneself to hardships and danger does not "reveal" the "true self", according to Foucault, but rather creates

a particular type of self and subjectivity. However, according to Foucault the "form" for the subject is in great part already constituted by power, before these self-constituting practices are employed. Schools, workplaces, households, government institutions, entertainment media and the healthcare sector all, through disciplinary power, contribute to forming people into being particular types of subjects.[202]

Theory of freedom[edit]

Todd May defines Foucault's concept of freedom as: that which we can do of ourselves within our specific historical context. A condition for this, according to Foucault, is that we are aware of our situation and how it has been created/affected (and is still being affected) by power. According to May, two of the aspects of how power has shaped peoples′ way of being, thinking and acting is described in the books where Foucault describes disciplinary power and the history of sexuality. However, May argues, there will always be aspects of peoples′ formation that will be unknown to them, hence the constant necessity for the type of analyses that Foucault did.[193]

Foucault argues that the forces that have affected people can be changed; people always have the capacity to change the factors that limits their freedom.[193] Freedom is thus not a state of being, but a practice – a way of being in relation to oneself, to others and to the world.[203] According to Todd May Foucault's concept of freedom also includes constructing histories like the ones Foucault did about the history of disciplinary power and sexuality – histories that investigate and describe the forces that have influenced people into becoming who they are. From the knowledge that is reached from such investigations, people can thereafter decide which forces they believe are acceptable and which they consider to be intolerable and has to be changed. Freedom is for Foucault a type of "experimentation" with different "transformations". Since these experiments cannot be controlled completely, May argues they may lead to the reconstruction of intolerable power relations or the creation of new ones. Thus, May argues, it is always necessary to continue with such experimentation and Foucauldian analyses.[193]

Practice of critique[edit]

Foucault's "alternative" to the modern subjectivity is described by Cressida Heyes as "critique." For Foucault there are no "good" and "bad" forms of subjectivity, since they are all a result of power relations.[200] In the same way, Foucault argues there are no "good" and "bad" norms. All norms and institutions are at the same time enabling as they are oppressing. Therefore, Foucault argues, it is always crucial to continue with the practice of "critique".[199] Critique is for Foucault a practice that searches for the processes and events that led to our way of being – a questioning of who we "are" and how this "we" came to be. Such a "critical ontology of the present" shows that peoples′ current "being" is in fact a historically contingent, unstable and changeable construction. Foucault emphasizes that since the current way of being is not a necessity, it is also possible to change it.[203] Critique also includes investigating how and when people are being enabled and when they are being oppressed by the current norms and institutions, finding ways to reduce limitations on freedom, resist normalization and develop new and different way of relating to oneself and others. Foucault argues that it is impossible to go beyond power relations, but that it is always possible to navigate power relations in a different way.[199]

Epimeleia heautou, "care for the self"[edit]

As an alternative to the modern "search" for the "true self",[202] and as a part of "the work of freedom",[203] Foucault discusses the antique Greek term ***epimeleia heautou***, "care for the self" (ἐπιμέλεια ἑαυτοῦ). According to Foucault, among the ancient Greek philosophers, self-awareness was not a goal in itself, but rather something that was sought after in order to "care for oneself". Care for the self consists of what Foucault calls "the art of living" or "technologies of the self."[202] The goal of these techniques was, according to Foucault, to transform oneself into a more ethical person. As an example of this, Foucault mentions meditation,[196] the stoic activity of contemplating past and future actions and evaluating if these actions are in line with ones values and goals, and "contemplation of nature." Contemplation of nature is another stoic activity, that consists of reflecting on how "small" one's existence is when compared to the greater cosmos.[202]

Theory of knowledge[edit]

Main article: Power-knowledge

Foucault is described by Mary Beth Mader as an epistemological constructivist and historicist.[204] Foucault is critical of the idea that humans can reach "absolute" knowledge about the world. A fundamental goal in many of Foucault's works is to show how that which has traditionally been considered as absolute, universal and true in fact are historically contingent. To Foucault, even the idea of absolute knowledge is a historically

contingent idea. This does however not lead to epistemological nihilism; rather, Foucault argues that we "always begin anew" when it comes to knowledge.[198] At the same time Foucault is critical of modern western philosophy for lacking "spirituality". With "spirituality" Foucault refers to a certain type of ethical being, and the processes that lead to this state of being. Foucault argues that such a spirituality was a natural part of the ancient Greek philosophy, where knowledge was considered as something that was only accessible to those that had an ethical character. According to Foucault this changed in the "cartesian moment", the moment when René Descartes reached the "insight" that self-awareness was something given (Cogito ergo sum, "I think, therefore I am"), and from this "insight" Descartes drew conclusions about God, the world, and knowledge. According to Foucault, since Descartes knowledge has been something separate from ethics. In modern times, Foucault argues, anyone can reach "knowledge", as long as they are rational beings, educated, willing to participate in the scientific community and use a scientific method. Foucault is critical of this "modern" view of knowledge.[205]

Foucault describes two types of "knowledge": "savoir" and "connaissance", two French terms that both can be translated as "knowledge" but with separate meanings for Foucault. By "savoir" Foucault is referring to a process where subjects are created, while at the same time these subjects also become objects for knowledge. An example of this can be seen in criminology and psychiatry. In these sciences, subjects such as "the rational person", "the mentally ill person", "the law abiding person", "the criminal", etc. are created, and these sciences center their attention and knowledge on these subjects. The knowledge about these subjects is "connaicance", while the process in which subjects and knowledge is created is "savoir".[204] A similar term in Foucaults corpus is "pouvoir/savoir" (power/knowledge). With this term Foucault is referring to a type of knowledge that is considered "common sense", but that is created and withheld in that position (as "common sense") by power. The term power/knowledge comes from Jeremy Benthams idea that panopticons wouldn't only be prisons, but would be used for experiments where the criminals' behaviour would be studied. Power/knowledge thus refers to forms of power where the power compares individuals, measures differences, establishes a norm and then forces this norm unto the subjects. This is especially successful when the established norm is internalized and institutionalized (by "institutionalized" Foucault refers to when the norm is omnipresent). Because then, when the norm is internalized and institutionalized, it has effectively become a part of peoples' "common sense" – the "obvious", the "given", the "natural". When this has happened, this "common sense" also affects the explicit knowledge (scientific knowledge), Foucault argues. Ellen K. Feder mean that the premise "the world consists of women and men" is an example of this. This premise, Feder argues, has been considered "common sense", and has led to the creation of the psychiatric diagnosis gender identity disorder (GID). For example, during the 1970s, children with behavior that was not considered appropriate for their gender was diagnosed with GID. The treatment then consisted of trying to make the child adapt to the prevailing gender norms. Feder argues that this is an example of power/knowledge since psychiatry, from the "common sense" premise "the world consists of women and men" (a premise which is upheld in this status by power), created a new diagnosis, a new type of subject and a whole body of knowledge surrounding this new subject.[206]

Influence and reception[edit]

Foucault's works have exercised a powerful influence over numerous humanistic and social scientific disciplines as one of the most influential and controversial scholars of the post-World War II period.[207][208] According to a London School of Economics' analysis in 2016, his works *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* were among the 25 most cited books in the social sciences of all time, at just over 100,000 citations.[209] In 2007, Foucault was listed as the single most cited scholar in the humanities by the *ISI Web of Science* among a large quantity of French philosophers, the compilation's author commenting that "What this says of modern scholarship is for the reader to decide—and it is imagined that judgments will vary from admiration to despair, depending on one's view".[210]

According to Gary Gutting, Foucault's "detailed historical remarks on the emergence of disciplinary and regulatory biopower have been widely influential."[211] Leo Bersani wrote that:

"[Foucault] is our most brilliant philosopher of power. More originally than any other contemporary thinker, he has attempted to define the historical constraints under which we live, at the same time that he has been anxious to account for—if possible, even to locate—the points at which we might resist those constraints and counter some of the moves of power. In the present climate of cynical disgust with the exercise of political power, Foucault's importance can hardly be exaggerated."[212]

Foucault's work on "biopower" has been widely influential within the disciplines of philosophy and political theory, particularly for such authors as Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, Antonio Negri, and Michael Hardt.[213] His discussions on power and discourse have inspired many critical theorists, who believe that Foucault's analysis of power structures could aid the struggle against inequality. They claim that

through discourse analysis, hierarchies may be uncovered and questioned by way of analyzing the corresponding fields of knowledge through which they are legitimated. This is one of the ways that Foucault's work is linked to critical theory.[214] His work *Discipline and Punish* influenced his friend and contemporary Gilles Deleuze, who published the paper "Postscript on the Societies of Control", praising Foucault's work but arguing that contemporary western society has in fact developed from a 'disciplinary society' into a 'society of control'.[215] Deleuze went on to publish a book dedicated to Foucault's thought in 1988 under the title *Foucault*.

Foucault's discussions of the relationship between power and knowledge has influenced postcolonial critiques in explaining the discursive formation of colonialism, particularly in Edward Said's work *Orientalism.*[216] Foucault's work has been compared to that of Erving Goffman by the sociologist Michael Hviid Jacobsen and Soren Kristiansen, who list Goffman as an influence on Foucault.[217] Foucault's writings, particularly *The History of Sexuality*, have also been very influential in feminist philosophy and queer theory, particularly the work of the major Feminist scholar Judith Butler due to his theories regarding the genealogy of maleness and femaleness, power, sexuality, and bodies.[207]

Critiques and engagements[edit]

Crypto-normativity[edit]

Main article: Foucault–Habermas debate

A prominent critique of Foucault's thought concerns his refusal to propose positive solutions to the social and political issues that he critiques. Since no human relation is devoid of power, freedom becomes elusive—even as an ideal. This stance which critiques normativity as socially constructed and contingent, but which relies on an implicit norm in order to mount the critique led philosopher Jürgen Habermas to describe Foucault's thinking as "crypto-normativist", covertly reliant on the very Enlightenment principles he attempts to argue against.[218] A similar critique has been advanced by Diana Taylor, and by Nancy Fraser who argues that "Foucault's critique encompasses traditional moral systems, he denies himself recourse to concepts such as 'freedom' and 'justice', and therefore lacks the ability to generate positive alternatives."[219] Likewise, scholar Nancy Pearcey points out Foucault's paradoxical stance: "[when someone] states that it is impossible to attain objectivity, is that an objective statement? The theory undercuts its own claims."[220]

Genealogy as historical method[edit]

The philosopher Richard Rorty has argued that Foucault's "archaeology of knowledge" is fundamentally negative, and thus fails to adequately establish any "new" theory of knowledge *per se*. Rather, Foucault simply provides a few valuable maxims regarding the reading of history. Rorty writes:

As far as I can see, all he has to offer are brilliant redescriptions of the past, supplemented by helpful hints on how to avoid being trapped by old historiographical assumptions. These hints consist largely of saying: "do not look for progress or meaning in history; do not see the history of a given activity, of any segment of culture, as the development of rationality or of freedom; do not use any philosophical vocabulary to characterize the essence of such activity or the goal it serves; do not assume that the way this activity is presently conducted gives any clue to the goals it served in the past".[221]

Foucault has frequently been criticized by historians for what they consider to be a lack of rigor in his analyses.[222] For example, Hans-Ulrich Wehler harshly criticized Foucault in 1998.[223] Wehler regards Foucault as a bad philosopher who wrongfully received a good response by the humanities and by social sciences. According to Wehler, Foucault's works are not only insufficient in their empiric historical aspects, but also often contradictory and lacking in clarity. For example, Foucault's concept of power is "desperatingly undifferentiated", and Foucault's thesis of a "disciplinary society" is, according to Wehler, only possible because Foucault does not properly differentiate between authority, force, power, violence and legitimacy.[224] In addition, his thesis is based on a one-sided choice of sources (prisons and psychiatric institutions) and neglects other types of organizations as e.g. factories. Also, Wehler criticizes Foucault's "francocentrism" because he did not take into consideration major German-speaking theorists of social sciences like Max Weber and Norbert Elias. In all, Wehler concludes that Foucault is "because of the endless series of flaws in his so-called empirical studies ... an intellectually dishonest, empirically absolutely unreliable, crypto-normativist seducer of Postmodernism".[225]

Feminist critiques[edit]

Though American feminists have built on Foucault's critiques of the historical construction of gender roles and sexuality, some feminists note the limitations of the masculinist subjectivity and ethical orientation that he describes.[226]

*Sexuality**[edit]***

The philosopher Roger Scruton argues in *Sexual Desire* (1986) that Foucault was incorrect to claim, in *The History of Sexuality*, that sexual morality is culturally relative. He criticizes Foucault for assuming that there could be societies in which a "problematisation" of the sexual did not occur, concluding that, "No history of thought could show the 'problematisation' of sexual experience to be peculiar to certain specific social formations: it is characteristic of personal experience generally, and therefore of every genuine social order."[227]

Foucault's approach to sexuality, which he sees as socially constructed, has become influential in queer theory. Foucault's resistance to identity politics, and his rejection of the psychoanalytic concept of "object choice", stands at odds with some theories of queer identity.[226]

*Social constructionism and human nature**[edit]***

Foucault is sometimes criticized for his prominent formulation of principles of social constructionism, which some see as an affront to the concept of truth. In Foucault's 1971 televised debate with Noam Chomsky, Foucault argued against the possibility of any fixed human nature, as posited by Chomsky's concept of innate human faculties. Chomsky argued that concepts of justice were rooted in human reason, whereas Foucault rejected the universal basis for a concept of justice.[228] Following the debate, Chomsky was stricken with Foucault's total rejection of the possibility of a universal morality, stating "He struck me as completely amoral, I'd never met anyone who was so totally amoral [...] I mean, I liked him personally, it's just that I couldn't make sense of him. It's as if he was from a different species, or something."[229]

*Education and authority**[edit]***

Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, while acknowledging that Foucault contributed to give a right of citizenship in cultural life to certain marginal and eccentric experiences (of sexuality, of cultural repression, of madness), asserts that his radical critique of authority was detrimental to education.[230]

1. Eribon 1991, p. 328.
2. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] Stokes 2004, p. 187.
3. ^ *J.D. Marshall (30 June 1996). Michel Foucault: Personal Autonomy and Education. Springer. p. 126. ISBN 978-0-7923-4016-4. Retrieved 6 December 2012.*
4. ^ *Foucault, Michel (1982). The Subject and Power. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9780226163123. Retrieved 25 November 2014.*
5. ^ *Foucault, Michel (2004). "An Interview with Michel Foucault by Charles Ruas". Death and the labyrinth : the world of Raymond Roussel. London New York: Continuum. p. 186. ISBN 978-0-8264-9362-0.*
6. ^ *Foucault, Michel, 1926-1984. (1984). "What Is An Author?". The Foucault reader. Rabinow, Paul. (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books. ISBN 0394529049. OCLC 10021125.*
7. ^ *Kvas, Kornelije (2020). The Boundaries of Realism in World Literature. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books. p. 90. ISBN 978-1-7936-0910-6.*
8. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] [e] [f] [g] [h] [i] [j] [k] Lynch, R. A. (2011) Foucault's theory of power. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 13-26). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
9. ^ Lynch (2011), p. 19
10. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] [e] May, T. (2011) Foucault's conception of freedom. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 71-83). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
11. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] [e] Taylor, C. (2011) Biopower. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 41-54). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
12. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] [e] [f] [g] [h] [i] Hoffman, M. (2011) Disciplinary power. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 27-39). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
13. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] Vintges, K. (2011) Freedom and spirituality. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 99-110). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
14. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] [e] [f] [g] [h] [i] Oksala, J. (2011) Freedom and bodies. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 85-97). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
15. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] Taylor, D. (2011) Introduction: Power, freedom and subjectivity. Ur Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 1-9). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
16. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] Taylor, D. (2011b) Practices of the self. Ur Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 173-186). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
17. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] Heyes, C. J. (2011) Subjectivity and power. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 159-172). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1

18. ^ *Norris, Christopher; Young, Robert (1981). "Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader". The Modern Language Review. **78** (2): 383. doi:10.2307/3729820. ISSN 0026-7937.*
19. ^ Jump up to: a b c d McGushin, E. (2011) Foucault's theory and practice of subjectivity. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 127-142). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
20. ^ Jump up to: a b c Mendieta, E. (2011) The practice of freedom. In Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 111-124). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
21. ^ Jump up to: a b Mader, M. B. (2014) Knowledge. Ur Lawlor, L. (red.) & Nale, J. (red.) *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon* (pp. 226-236). Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-11921-4
22. ^ Stone, B. E. (2011) Subjectivity and truth. Ur Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 143-157). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
23. ^ Fader, E. K. (2011) Power/knowledge. Ur Taylor, D. (red.) *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 55-68). Acumen Publishing Ltd., ISBN 978-1-84465-234-1
24. ^ Jump up to: a b *Gutting, Gary; Oksala, Johanna (2019), "Michel Foucault", in Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2019 ed.), Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, retrieved 27 June 2019*
25. ^
26.
27. *Faubion, James (21 June 2019). "Michel Foucault | French philosopher and historian". Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 27 June 2019.*
28. ^ *May 12th; publishing, 2016|Academic; Citations; Impact; Comments, LSE comment|65 (12 May 2016). "What are the most-cited publications in the social sciences (according to Google Scholar)?". Impact of Social Sciences. Retrieved 27 June 2019.*
29. ^ *"The most cited authors of books in the humanities". timeshighereducation.co.uk. 26 March 2009. Retrieved 16 November 2009.*
30. ^ *Gutting, Gary (18 July 2005). The Cambridge Companion to Foucault. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521840828.*
31. ^ *"Michel Foucault: Philosopher of Power". Washington Post. 15 March 1981. ISSN 0190-8286. Retrieved 27 June2019.*
32. ^ *Rose, Nikolas; Rabinow, Paul (June 2006). "Biopower Today". BioSocieties. **1** (2): 195–217. doi:10.1017/S1745855206040014. ISSN 1745-8560 – via Cambridge Core.*
33. ^ *Van Loon, Borin (2001). Introducing Critical Theory. Thriplow: Icon Books Ltd.*
34. ^ *Deleuze, Gilles (1992). "Postscript on the Societies of Control". October. **59**: 3–7. ISSN 0162-2870. JSTOR 778828.*
35. ^ *Said, Edward (1979). Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.*
36. ^ *Jacobsen, Michael Hviid; Kristiansen, Soren (2014). The Social Thought of Erving Goffman. London: SAGE Publications. pp. 5, 86. ISBN 978-1412998031.*
37. ^ Ashenden, S., & Owen, D. (Eds.). (1999). Foucault contra Habermas: Recasting the dialogue between genealogy and critical theory. Sage.
38. ^ Taylor, D. (2010). Michel Foucault: key concepts. Acumen. pp. 2–3
39. ^ *Pearcey, Nancy (2015). Finding Truth. p. 208. ISBN 978-0781413084.*
40. ^ Richard Rorty. *Foucault and Epistemology* in Hoy, D (eds) 'Foucault: A critical reader' Basil Blackwell. Oxford, 1986.
41. ^ Mills, S. (2003). Michel Foucault: Routledge Critical Thinkers. Chicago p. 23
42. ^ Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (1998): *Die Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte*, pp. 45–95. ISBN 3-406-42076-1
43. ^ Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (1998): *Die Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte*, p. 81. ISBN 3-406-42076-1
44. ^ Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (1998): *Die Herausforderung der Kulturgeschichte*, p. 91. ISBN 3-406-42076-1
45. ^ Jump up to: a b Downing, Lisa. "The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault." (2008). Cambridge University Press. pp. 104-117
46. ^ *Scruton, Roger (1994). Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation. London: Phoenix Books. pp. 34, 362. ISBN 978-1-85799-100-0.*
47. ^ Wilkin, P. (1999). Chomsky and Foucault on human nature and politics: an essential difference?. Social Theory and Practice, pp. 177–210.
48. ^ James Miller, Jim Miller. 1993. The Passion of Michel Foucault. Harvard University Press, pp. 201–03
49. ^ Vargas Llosa, Mario (2010). Breve discurso sobre la cultura [Short Discourse on Culture]. *Letras libres* 139: 48–55 [1

Francis Fukuyama

October 27, 1952 (age 67)

Scholarship[edit]

The End of History and the Last Man[edit]

Main article: The End of History and the Last Man

Fukuyama is best known as the author of *The End of History and the Last Man*, in which he argued that the progression of human history as a struggle between ideologies is largely at an end, with the world settling on liberal democracy after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Fukuyama predicted the eventual global triumph of political and economic liberalism:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such.... That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

Authors like Ralf Dahrendorf argued in 1990 that the essay gave Fukuyama his 15 minutes of fame, which will be followed by a slide into obscurity.[14][15] He continued to remain a relevant and cited public intellectual leading American communitarian Amitai Etzioni to declare him "one of the few enduring public intellectuals. They are often media stars who are eaten up and spat out after their 15 minutes. But he has lasted."[16]

According to Fukuyama, one of the main reasons for the massive criticism against *The End of History* was the aggressive stance that it took towards postmodernism. Postmodern philosophy had, in Fukuyama's opinion, undermined the ideology behind liberal democracy, leaving the western world in a potentially weaker position.[17] The fact that Marxism and fascism had been proven untenable for practical use while liberal democracy still thrived was reason enough to embrace the hopeful attitude of the Progressive era, as this hope for the future was what made a society worth struggling to maintain. Postmodernism, which, by this time, had become embedded in the cultural consciousness, offered no hope and nothing to sustain a necessary sense of community, instead relying only on lofty intellectual premises.[18] Being a work that both praised the ideals of a group that had fallen out of favor and challenged the premises of the group that had replaced them, it was bound to create some controversy.

The Origins of Political Order[edit]

Main article: The Origins of Political Order

In the 2011 book, Fukuyama describes what makes a state stable. It uses comparative political history to develop a theory of the stability of a political system. According to Fukuyama, an ideal political order needs a modern and effective state, the rule of law governing the state and be accountable.[19]

Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Present Day[edit]

Main article: Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Present Day

The 2014 book is the second book on political order, following the 2011 book *The Origins of Political Order.* In this book, Fukuyama covers events taking place since the French Revolution and shed light on political institutions and their development in different regions.[20]

After tracing how a modern and effective government was developed in the U.S., Fukuyama asserts that it is experiencing political decay.[21] Fukuyama believes that political decay can be seen in the deterioration of bureaucracies, special interest groups capturing the legislature, and inevitable but cumbersome judicial processes challenging all types of government action.[22]

Other works[edit]

Fukuyama has written a number of other books, among them *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* and *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. In the latter, he qualified his original "end of history" thesis, arguing that since biotechnology increasingly allows humans to

control their own evolution, it may allow humans to alter human nature, thereby putting liberal democracy at risk.[23] One possible outcome could be that an altered human nature could end in radical inequality. He is a fierce enemy of transhumanism, an intellectual movement asserting that posthumanity is a desirable goal.

In another work, *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstruction of Social Order*, Fukuyama explores the origins of social norms, and analyses the current disruptions in the fabric of our moral traditions, which he considers as arising from a shift from the manufacturing to the information age. This shift is, he thinks, normal and will prove self-correcting, given the intrinsic human need for social norms and rules.

In 2006, in *America at the Crossroads*, Fukuyama discusses the history of neoconservatism, with particular focus on its major tenets and political implications. He outlines his rationale for supporting the Bush administration, as well as where he believes it has gone wrong.

In 2008, Fukuyama published the book *Falling Behind: Explaining the Development Gap Between Latin America and the United States*, which resulted from research and a conference funded by Grupo Mayan to gain understanding on why Latin America, once far wealthier than North America, fell behind in terms of development in only a matter of centuries. Discussing this book at a 2009 conference, Fukuyama outlined his belief that inequality within Latin American nations is a key impediment to growth. An unequal distribution of wealth, he stated, leads to social upheaval, which then results in stunted growth.[24]

His most recent book, published in 2018, is *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*.

Political views[edit]

Neoconservatism[edit]

As a key Reagan Administration contributor to the formulation of the Reagan Doctrine, Fukuyama is an important figure in the rise of neoconservatism, although his works came out years after Irving Kristol's 1972 book crystallized neoconservatism.[25] Fukuyama was active in the Project for the New American Century think tank starting in 1997, and as a member co-signed the organization's 1998 letter recommending that President Bill Clinton support Iraqi insurgencies in the overthrow of then-President of Iraq Saddam Hussein.[26] He was also among forty co-signers of William Kristol's September 20, 2001 letter to President George W. Bush after the September 11, 2001 attacks that suggested the U.S. not only "capture or kill Osama bin Laden", but also embark upon "a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq".[27]

In a *New York Times* article from February 2006, Fukuyama, in considering the ongoing Iraq War, stated: "What American foreign policy needs is not a return to a narrow and cynical realism, but rather the formulation of a 'realistic Wilsonianism' that better matches means to ends."[28] In regard to neoconservatism, he went on to say: "What is needed now are new ideas, neither neoconservative nor realist, for how America is to relate to the rest of the world – ideas that retain the neoconservative belief in the universality of human rights, but without its illusions about the efficacy of American power and hegemony to bring these ends about."[28]

Current views[edit]

Fukuyama began to distance himself from the neoconservative agenda of the Bush administration, citing its excessive militarism and embrace of unilateral armed intervention, particularly in the Middle East. By late 2003, Fukuyama had voiced his growing opposition to the Iraq War[29] and called for Donald Rumsfeld's resignation as Secretary of Defense.[30]

At an annual dinner of the American Enterprise Institute in February 2004, Dick Cheney and Charles Krauthammer declared the beginning of a unipolar era under American hegemony. "All of these people around me were cheering wildly,"[31] Fukuyama remembers. He believes that the Iraq War was being blundered. "All of my friends had taken leave of reality."[31] He has not spoken to Paul Wolfowitz (previously a good friend) since.[31]

Fukuyama declared he would not be voting for Bush,[32] and that the Bush administration had made three mistakes:[33]

- Overstating the threat of Islamic extremism to the US
- Failing to foresee the fierce negative reaction to its "benevolent hegemony". From the very beginning showing a negative attitude toward the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and not seeing that it would increase anti-Americanism in other countries

- Misjudging what was needed to bring peace in Iraq and being overly optimistic about the success with which social engineering of western values could be applied to Iraq and the Middle East in general.

Fukuyama believes the US has a right to promote its own values in the world, but more along the lines of what he calls "realistic Wilsonianism", with military intervention only as a last resort and only in addition to other measures. A latent military force is more likely to have an effect than actual deployment. The US spends 43% of global military spending,[34] but Iraq shows there are limits to its effectiveness.

The US should instead stimulate political and economic development and gain a better understanding of what happens in other countries. The best instruments are setting a good example and providing education and, in many cases, money. The secret of development, be it political or economic, is that it never comes from outsiders, but always from people in the country itself. One thing the US proved to have excelled in during the aftermath of World War II was the formation of international institutions. A return to support for these structures would combine American power with international legitimacy, but such measures require a lot of patience. This is the central thesis of his 2006 work *America at the Crossroads*.

In a 2006 essay in *The New York Times Magazine* strongly critical of the invasion, he identified neoconservatism with Leninism. He wrote that neoconservatives:[35]

believed that history can be pushed along with the right application of power and will. Leninism was a tragedy in its Bolshevik version, and it has returned as farce when practiced by the United States. Neoconservatism, as both a political symbol and a body of thought, has evolved into something I can no longer support.

Fukuyama announced the end of the neoconservative moment and argued for the demilitarization of the War on Terrorism:[35]

[W]ar is the wrong metaphor for the broader struggle, since wars are fought at full intensity and have clear beginnings and endings. Meeting the jihadist challenge is more of a "long, twilight struggle" [quoting John F. Kennedy's inaugural address] whose core is not a military campaign but a political contest for the hearts and minds of ordinary Muslims around the world.

Fukuyama endorsed Barack Obama in the 2008 US presidential election. He states:[36]

I'm voting for Barack Obama this November for a very simple reason. It is hard to imagine a more disastrous presidency than that of George W. Bush. It was bad enough that he launched an unnecessary war and undermined the standing of the United States throughout the world in his first term. But in the waning days of his administration, he is presiding over a collapse of the American financial system and broader economy that will have consequences for years to come. As a general rule, democracies don't work well if voters do not hold political parties accountable for failure. While John McCain is trying desperately to pretend that he never had anything to do with the Republican Party, I think it would be a travesty to reward the Republicans for failure on such a grand scale.

In a 2018 interview with *New Statesman*, when asked about his views on the resurgence of socialist politics in the United States and the United Kingdom, he responded:[37]

It all depends on what you mean by socialism. Ownership of the means of production – except in areas where it's clearly called for, like public utilities – I don't think that's going to work. If you mean redistributive programmes that try to redress this big imbalance in both incomes and wealth that has emerged then, yes, I think not only can it come back, it ought to come back. This extended period, which started with Reagan and Thatcher, in which a certain set of ideas about the benefits of unregulated markets took hold, in many ways it's had a disastrous effect. At this juncture, it seems to me that certain things Karl Marx said are turning out to be true. He talked about the crisis of overproduction… that workers would be impoverished and there would be insufficient demand.

In a review for *The Washington Post*, Fukuyama discussed Ezra Klein's 2020 book *Why We're Polarized* regarding US politics, and outlined Klein's central conclusion about the importance of race and white identity to Donald Trump voters and Republicans.[38]

Affiliations[edit]

- Between 2006 and 2008, Fukuyama advised Muammar Gaddafi as part of the Monitor Group, a consultancy firm based in Cambridge, MA.[39]
- In August 2005, Fukuyama co-founded *The American Interest*, a bimonthly magazine devoted to the broad theme of "America in the World". He is currently chairman of the editorial board.[13]

- Fukuyama was a member of the RAND Corporation's Political Science Department from 1979 to 1980, 1983 to 1989, and 1995 to 1996. He is now a member of the Board of Trustees.[13]
- Fukuyama was a member of the President's Council on Bioethics from 2001 to 2004.[13]
- Fukuyama is a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS).
- Fukuyama was on the steering committee for the Scooter Libby Legal Defense Trust.[40] Fukuyama is a long-time friend of Libby. They served together in the State Department in the 1980s.
- Fukuyama is a member of the Board of Counselors for the Pyle Center of Northeast Asian Studies at the National Bureau of Asian Research.[41]
- Fukuyama is on the board of Global Financial Integrity.
- Fukuyama is on the executive board of the Inter-American Dialogue.

1. Dahrendorf (1990) *Reflections on the revolution in Europe* p. 37
2. ^ Luciano Canfora *La grande illusione del capitalismo eterno* preface to Ercolani, Paolo *La storia infinita. Marx, il liberalismo e la maledizione di Nietzsche* quotation:
   Quanto detto sin qui può forse bastare a non prendere sul serio saggi troppo fortunati (ma già quasi avviati al dimenticatoio) come La fine della storia del nippo-statunitense Fukuyama. Libro che, comunque, è stato ampiamente stroncato per le sciocchezze che contiene: e non già da tardi epigoni del marxismo-leninismo, ma da filosofi 'liberal' come Dahrendorf, il quale ha anche avuto il buon senso di elencare gli errori di fatto (tali da mettere in forse il conseguimento della "maturità classica"!) che il troppo fortunato libretto contiene.
3. ^ *Wroe, Nicholas (May 10, 2002). "History's Pallbearer". The Guardian. Guardian Media Group.*
4. ^ 'Francis Fukuyama, "Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later", *History and Theory* 34, 2: "World Historians and Their Critics" (May 1995): 43.
5. ^ 'Francis Fukuyama, "Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later", *History and Theory* 34, 2: World Historians and Their Critics (May 1995): 36.
6. ^ Fukuyama 2011, p. 312,420.
7. ^ *Fukuyama, Francis. "Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy". Stanford.edu. Retrieved December 29, 2016.*
8. ^ *Berman, Sheri (September 11, 2014). "Global Warning". The New York Times. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved May 15,2020.*
9. ^ *Fukuyama, Francis (December 8, 2016). "America in Decay". ISSN 0015-7120. Retrieved May 15, 2020.*
10. ^ For a critical analysis of Fukuyama's bioethical argument, see: *Jordaan, D. W. (2009). "Antipromethean Fallacies: A Critique of Fukuyama's Bioethics". Biotechnology Law Report. **28** (5): 577–590. doi:10.1089/blr.2009.9915.*
11. ^ *Ryan Weddle (February 18, 2009). "Fukuyama: "Social Agenda" Needed to Combat Poverty in Latin America". Devex. Retrieved February 19, 2009.*
12. ^ Irving Kristol (1972), *On the Democratic Idea in America*, New York: Harper.
13. ^ *Abrams, Elliott; et al. (January 26, 1998). "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq". Archived from the original(PDF) on September 9, 2008. Retrieved August 16, 2008.*
14. ^ *"Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism". Project for the New American Century. Archived from the original on December 30, 2004.*
15. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] *Fukuyama, Francis (February 19, 2006). "After Neoconservatism". The New York Times. Retrieved May 2,2010.*
16. ^ *Francis Fukuyama (June 1, 2004). "The Neoconservative Moment" (PDF). The National Interest. Archived from the original (PDF) on June 10, 2007. Retrieved May 13, 2007.*
17. ^ *"Fukuyama Withdraws Bush Support". Today's Zaman. July 14, 2004. Archived from the original on June 13, 2006. Retrieved May 13, 2007.*
18. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] [c] [d] *Bast, Andrew (April 10, 2011). "The Beginning of History". Newsweek. Retrieved May 5, 2011.*
19. ^ *Andrew Billen (July 14, 2004). "Why I won't vote for George Bush". The Times. London. Retrieved May 13, 2007.*
20. ^ *"Francis Fukuyama on Neo-Cons, Foreign Policy". NPR. March 1, 2006.*
21. ^ *"The 15 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2009". Retrieved May 5, 2011.*
22. ^ Jump up to:[a] [b] *Francis Fukuyama (February 19, 2006). "After Neoconservatism". The New York Times Magazine. Retrieved May 13, 2007.*
23. ^ *Francis Fukuyama (November 3, 2008). "Francis Fukuyama". The American Conservative. Retrieved October 30, 2008.*
24. ^ *George Eaton (October 17, 2018). "Francis Fukuyama interview: "Socialism ought to come back"". New Statesman America. Retrieved October 17, 2018.*

25. ^ *Francis Fukuyama (January 24, 2020). "Why red and blue America can't hear each other anymore". The Washington Post. These two phenomena — the Southern realignment and the human propensity to bond with groups — bring us to Klein's central conclusion about the centrality of race for Trump voters and Republicans who believe their white identity is under threat.*
26. ^ *Pilkington, Ed (March 4, 2011). "US firm Monitor Group admits mistakes over $3m Gaddafi deal". Guardian. Retrieved March 25, 2011.*
27. ^ *Lewis, Neil A. (February 3, 2006). "Defense Fund Raises Money in Libby Case". The New York Times. Retrieved May 13, 2007.*
28. ^ Pyle Center for Northeast Asian Studies, the National Bureau of Asian Research.